

Serial No.: 10/678,880
Filing Date: October 3, 2003

Examiner: M. Marcheschi
Art Unit: 1755

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 14 have been cancelled without prejudice.

New claims 15 – 21 have been added and are pending.

Claims 15 – 21 are directed to the elected invention but are believed to more accurately characterize the inventive process of this application.

Support for new claims 15 – 21 can be found in the specification at page 3, line 14 to page 4, line 30. In this regard, attention is particularly drawn to page 3, lines 28 – 30 and page 4, lines 1 – 6.

Pursuant to a restriction requirement, the applicant has cancelled claims 1 -8 without prejudice and elected to prosecute the invention of claims 9 – 14. That elected invention is now presented in new claims 15 – 21.

The Examiner had rejected claims 9 – 14 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) and/or 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Miyaji, et al. (U.S. 6,074,287), Doerre, et al. (U.S. 5,334,281), or Tsai, et al. (U.S. 6,117,780). Each of the foregoing references reveal chemical mechanical polishing processes which are interrupted in order to conduct an inspection of the polished surface. Thus in each reference the entire polishing process is halted at certain points in time to allow for inspection of the part in comparison to a specification. If the specification is achieved then the polishing process is ended. If the specification is not yet achieved then the polishing process is resumed. In this regard, for example, please see Tsai, et al. column 3, lines 1 – 10.

In contrast, the inventive process of this application requires an interruption in the mechanical abrasion only while at the same time the chemical polishing continues uninterrupted. New claims 15 – 21 have been drafted to more clearly illuminate this feature difference. New claim 15 clearly requires continuous delivery of the chemical polishing slurry to the surface while the mechanical abrasion is interrupted. See the specification at page 3, lines 28-30. Claim 19 requires that the composition of the chemical polishing slurry be changed such that at times it contains no abrasive particles thereby intermittently interrupting the mechanical abrasion. See the specification at page 4, lines 1-6. It is believed that this intermittent interruption of the mechanical abrasion

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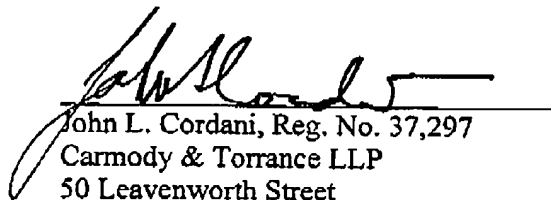
while maintaining the chemical polishing provides certain benefits. In this regard please see the specification at page 3, lines 1-25.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the cited references are not applicable since none of the references reveal a process where mechanical abrasion is intermittently halted but the chemical polishing process is continued. Instead the references merely reveal situations where the entire chemical mechanical polishing process (ie. mechanical abrasion and chemical polishing) are temporarily halted to inspect the part being polished.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, it is believed that this application is in a condition for immediate allowance. Such action is earnestly sought. If the Examiner perceives of any reason why this application should not be allowed, he is requested to contact the undersigned for a telephonic interview prior to issuance of the next Office action.

Respectfully Submitted:



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